

Department of International Affairs
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
297 Fourth Avenue - New York 10, N. Y.

CHASE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

APR 23 1959

HARTFORD
SEMINARY FOUNDATION

Volume 7

Number 1

\$1.00 per year

February-March, 1959

MESSAGE SENT TO PRESIDENT EISENHOWER DURING BERLIN CRISIS DISCUSSIONS, AND REPLY

In the midst of mounting talk by a few public figures about possible "mobilization," "NATO military maneuvers," and even about "the first strike," or "pre-emptive war," President Eisenhower, at his news conference on March 4, made a statement which cut through such discussions to lay down two lines: One was firmness in the rights and responsibilities of Western powers in Berlin; the other was the approach of negotiation and seeking constructive responses to the crisis. Support for these points was to be found in discussions among churchmen on these issues. A telegram was sent by Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg as President of the National Council of Churches to President Eisenhower, following the reporting of that White House press conference. The text of the telegram follows:

"WE STRONGLY SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR OWN DEEP CONVICTIONS EXPRESSED IN YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE: ASSURING STUDY WITH ALLIES TO MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE ANSWER LATEST SOVIET COMMUNICATION; DISAVOWING IDEA UNITED STATES MIGHT STRIKE FIRST BLOW IN POSSIBLE WAR; DISCOURAGING SUCH TALK AS CREATING MORE MISAPPREHENSION THAN UNDERSTANDING; DECLARING GENERAL MOBILIZATION FOR LONG TIME FUTILE AND DISASTROUS, MAKING GARRISON STATE IN DEMOCRACIES; SAYING UNITED STATES, WHILE NOT ABANDONING BERLIN RESPONSIBILITIES, WILL EXPLORE DIFFERENT PROPOSITIONS FOR PEACE TREATY; PERSISTING IN READINESS TO NEGOTIATE.

"BE ASSURED OUR PRAYERS FOR CONTINUING STRENGTH AND WISDOM FROM GOD FOR YOU, SECRETARY DULLES, AND ALL ASSOCIATED WITH YOU IN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WELFARE OUR NATION AND MORE LIBERTY, JUSTICE, PEACE ON EARTH."

In reply, the following letter was received by Dr. Dahlberg:

"Once again I am indebted to you and to your associates in the National Council of Churches. Thank you very much for your affirmation of the convictions I expressed in my recent press conference with respect to the difficult Berlin situation.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Dwight D. Eisenhower

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 - Message to President Eisenhower on Berlin Crisis, and Reply
- 2 - Freedom, World Order Considered at National Council General Board
- Declaration of Freedom Set Forth in Appeal asking for Response
- 4 - Conference Report Received, Transmitted to Department of International Affairs
- Preview of Department Processes Given by Chairman Gross
- 6 - Prayer Offered for Secretary Dulles and Message Sent to Him
- President Dahlberg Speaks on "The Churches and the National Conscience"
- 8 - Report of World Study Conference Published
- Nationwide Program of Education and Action for Peace Moves Ahead

FREEDOM AND WORLD ORDER MATTERS CONSIDERED AT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

In a ringing declaration of freedom, the policy-making General Board of the National Council of Churches, meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, February 25-26, issued what has become known as "The Hartford Appeal."

According to regular procedure for conference reports, it received the Report of the Fifth World Order Study Conference and transmitted it to the Department of International Affairs for action in keeping with the General Board resolution of December 1958.

The members sent a message to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, after joining in prayer for him.

They heard President Edwin T. Dahlberg deliver a vigorous address on "The Churches and the National Conscience," in which he proclaimed the right and responsibility of the churches to speak out on life and death issues of our society "with conviction and power."

DECLARATION OF FREEDOM SET FORTH IN APPEAL ASKING FOR RESPONSE

In the same session when the General Board discussed, received and transmitted the Report of the Fifth World Order Study Conference to the Department of International Affairs, it also spoke forthrightly, in effect, to critics who had questioned the right of that Conference and its delegates to speak on crucial issues in international affairs.

Lifting the level of its consideration beyond any specific policy question, the General Board addressed itself to the basic issue of freedom. It affirmed the "right and duty" of the churches to study and comment on issues of human concern, however controversial. It also invited response to the appeal both in communications and in the practice of freedom. The full text of "The Hartford Appeal" follows:

"To the Christian Churches in the United States of America,

"GREETINGS:

"This letter, addressed in Christian fellowship to the whole community of the Church, heralds a moment significant for the life and work of the National Council of Churches and of its member churches. Every organization must, on occasion, confront issues which test its purposes and try its values. Such an issue has now arisen growing out of the Fifth World Order Study Conference and its message entitled 'Christian Responsibility on a Changing Planet.'

"It arises in the form of a series of challenges to a basic tenet of the National Council of Churches, stated most recently by the General Board at its meeting of December 3-4, 1958. This concerns the right and duty of the Christian Churches and their Councils 'to study and comment upon issues, no matter how controversial, in the realm of politics, economics and social affairs, in view of their common faith in Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior. In exercising this right and fulfilling this duty, the National Council of Churches has repeatedly been charged by enemies and criticized by worried friends as being soft towards communism.

DECLARATION OF FREEDOM SET FORTH IN APPEAL FOR RESPONSE (cont'd)

"Reiterating our loyalty to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our opposition to atheistic communism, we declare that the basic challenge to the Council and to the churches does not arise solely from specific viewpoints or conclusions expressed by them.

"The issue is the right of the citizen of whatever race or creed, and of any peaceable organizations he chooses to form or join, to discuss freely and to express judgments, without exposure to attacks upon motive or integrity for daring to exercise the right to do so. Such a right is especially vital to the Church, which owes a duty to lead and to inform, so that its members may be aided in reaching morally valid judgments in the light of their common faith.

"This freedom we cherish does not belong to the Church alone. Like all fundamental rights, it is linked with other freedoms, including those of the press, assemblage, and worship. We defend these rights with equal vigor.

"Our nation faces dilemmas, at home and abroad, which are difficult enough to resolve even with the benefit of full and forthright public debate. There is little reason to hope these dilemmas will diminish or disappear in the foreseeable future, or that they will make lesser claims upon our wisdom and fortitude. Accordingly, the right of free discussion becomes ever more essential, not as a private privilege but as a public necessity, and attacks upon it must be vigilantly resisted.

"The National Council of Churches reminds the churches that its pronouncements, policy statements, and findings of Study Conferences are designed to help our members in the free process of finding the truth and acting upon it. They are not to be interpreted as beyond thoughtful criticism.

"NOW, THEREFORE,

"The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. addresses this APPEAL to all of its constituent churches, related councils and organizations:

1. UPHOLD the right and duty of the churches and their councils to study and comment upon issues of human concern, however controversial.
2. ENCOURAGE from within and without the churches and their councils full and open criticism of the positions taken by them.
3. RESIST all efforts to discourage full freedom of discussion and, in discussion, REJECT attempts to suppress such freedom.
4. INVITE full candor on the part of government officials and other leaders of opinion in the public exposition of problems and dilemmas affecting our nation and its citizens.

Your response to this APPEAL is invited and will be welcomed by the National Council of Churches."

REPORT OF WORLD ORDER STUDY CONFERENCE RECEIVED AND TRANSMITTED FOR ACTION

Three elements were included in the General Board's consideration of the Report of the Fifth World Order Study Conference. Following regular procedure for such conference findings, the Report was considered by the General Board in discussion of issues dealt with in the Conference, it was received by the Board, and it was transmitted to the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches for action. The nature of this action is explicit in the procedures of the National Council and was spelled out in the General Board's resolution in December 1958. Two sections of that resolution are as follows:

"If and when in this process it appears that specific pronouncements in any area of international affairs should be made by the National Council of Churches, such pronouncement will be developed by the responsible departments and divisions of the Council for adoption by the General Board.

"We call upon our constituency and all American citizens to study carefully the full text of the message of the Cleveland Conference, and later, when available, its full report, to the end that reasoned progress may be made by the people of the United States and their government toward solving the serious problems faced by our nation in its foreign relations."

PREVIEW OF DEPARTMENT PROCESSES GIVEN BY CHAIRMAN GROSS

The Chairman of the Department, the Hon. Ernest A. Gross, gave "a preview of the processes by which the Department, in accordance with its normal practice" would seek to deal with the many crucial issues in the Report. He said:

"First. The Department would, of course, comply with the basic rule that if specific pronouncements in any area of international affairs are to be made by the National Council, such pronouncements would be developed by the Department and its parent Division for adoption by the Board.

"Second. The Department, unlike the World Order Study Conference, is an ongoing body with a continuing agenda of concerns. It has not regarded it as a primary function to formulate pronouncements or resolutions. We sometimes find consensus, but the kind of 'resolution' we strive for is the resolution of doubts and dilemmas through the unending search for morally valid judgments. Reports of study groups, such as the highly representative World Order Study Conference, we regard as grist to a mill of debate and self-education which never stops grinding.

"Third. The Department is aware that such Study Conferences do not profess to speak for anyone other than the Delegates in attendance and that, even as to these, there is no claim of unanimity on every specific issue. I can assure you on behalf of the Department that any charge that delegates were hand-picked for some predetermined conclusion is groundless. Nor did the delegates ever claim to speak for the entire Protestant community on any issue. However, there are, of course, issues on which we are all obviously united, such as vigorous opposition to Godless communism.

"Fourth. The range of the Department's continuing agenda is as broad as foreign policy itself. We do not feel that we can afford either the comforts of complacency or the illusions of dogma. The Call to the Study Conference, issued for the National Council by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, summarizes the awesome dimension of our concerns:

"Our faith and world revolution constantly challenge us as Christians and as churches to new action in international affairs. Dynamic changes thrust themselves upon us in nuclear developments, space penetration, rapid social shifts, rising nationalism, anti-colonialism, the birth of nations and new alliances The United Nations has been put to severe tests revealing both problems and potentialities."

REPORT OF WORLD ORDER STUDY CONFERENCE; CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT (cont'd)

"Fifth. As part of this preview of processes in which the Department will no doubt consider the Conference Report, I venture to take, by way of illustration only, one of the many complex problems with which the Conference Report deals. Please note that I refer to the 'Report', not to the Conference Message alone, since this is but one part although an important part, of the Report as a whole. I refer to the problem of United States relations with China.

"A Statement to the Conference was read by myself as Chairman, and ordered by the Conference to be printed as part of its Report. The Conference was reminded that during the past five years, the problem of United States relations with China has been of continuing concern to the Department of International Affairs. In 1953, the Conference on the Churches and World Order had recommended that the Department initiate a study of the problems here involved, in order to identify any moral principles relevant to provide Christians with information on which sound decisions can be based.

"The viewpoints expressed on this issue in the 1958 Conference Message are not the same as those in the Statement of the Chairman. The Department of International Affairs will have both the Message and the Statement before it. It will, however, have a great deal more. It will have before it the viewpoints, official and personal, of governmental and congressional leaders and of private groups in this country. It will have the viewpoints of other governments, expressed in the United Nations and elsewhere. As Chairman of the Department I have invited the Ambassador of the Republic of China, George Yeh, as well as Dr. T. F. Tsiang, the Nationalist Delegate to the United Nations, to meet with the Department for full and frank discussions. I am privileged to have had long and friendly relationship with these two most able diplomats and know that our members will greatly profit from such a meeting.

"The Department has regarded the question of China as a dilemma of grave complexity and, only too obviously, one fraught with deeply felt emotions. Some of us in the Department are opposed to the recognition of Red China so long as it pursues its present lawless, vindictive and repressive course. Others, with equal awareness of the evil nature of the regime, believe that so huge a concentration of power should be brought within the processes of the United Nations and, in particular, plans for controlled disarmament; and that increased communication with the Chinese people would serve our own purposes better than it would serve the enemies of freedom.

"All members of the Department, however, appear to agree that the China issue does pose a serious dilemma. They feel that all aspects of the dilemma should be accorded forthright and candid public analysis by government and private leaders alike. The members of the Department believe that personal attacks upon the motives or moral integrity of those expressing divergent viewpoints do a disservice to the national interest as well as to the fellowship of the Church.

"Sixth. Finally, I would remind the General Board that the Conference Report deals with many issues of national concern in addition to that of China. That such a reminder should be in order is testimony to the corrosive effect of intemperate attacks upon the treatment of any one particular issue.

"The Department is aware of the dilemmas also posed by threatened nuclear devastation, rising expectations of impoverished and expanding populations, and methods for strengthening the United Nations and regional organizations such as NATO. As to all these and more, the Department of International Affairs pledges careful and balanced attention under the guidance of the Division of Christian Life and Work and of the General Board."

PRAYER OFFERED FOR SECRETARY DULLES AND MESSAGE SENT TO HIM

Prayers were offered for the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, in his illness, and a message was sent to him at Walter Reed Hospital. The General Board was led in prayers for him by the Rev. Gardiner M. Day, rector of Christ Church (Episcopal) in Cambridge, Mass., who conducted the opening service of worship, and by the Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, former President of the National Council of Churches and Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The message sent to Mr. Dulles follows:

"Dear Mr. Dulles:

"We are deeply moved by our present illness and suffering.

"We remember with appreciation the many years of devoted and inspiring leadership which you have given to the work of the Church in international affairs. Preeminently among Christian laymen you have helped churches and their members in this country and around the globe to assume more fully their world Christian responsibilities.

"We are especially grateful for the way in which you led the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace and helped to establish the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

"We are mindful that as Secretary of State you have heroically carried tremendous burdens, seeking the welfare of our nation and more justice, freedom, and peace among nations.

"Therefore, the General Board of the National Council of Churches wishes to express to you our sense of Christian concern and fellowship in your present time of trial. We bow together in prayer for God's blessing upon you, your loved ones and those who share responsibilities for the well-being of our nation and the peace of the world.

"With sincere affection and regard, we remain,

"Faithfully yours,

"Edwin T. Dahlberg
President of National
Council of Churches."

PRESIDENT DAHLBERG SPEAKS ON "THE CHURCHES AND THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE"

A joint fellowship luncheon of the Greater Hartford Council, the Connecticut Council and the National Council of Churches was addressed by Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg. He spoke on the right and responsibility of the churches by "a clear Biblical mandate to teach and to enlighten the conscience of our own generation in the life and death issues of our time." Excerpts of his address follow:

"The Church must in a sense function as the conscience of the nation. This does not mean that the Church can speak authoritatively for all the people of the United States. The National Council of Churches, specifically, would in no sense claim to speak for all the 38 million members of its own constituency. It would be stupid to make such a pretension. But all the churches together, by open debate on the great issues of private and public concern alike, can help to shed the light of Christ on the pathway of the nation.

PRESIDENT DAHLBERG: "THE CHURCHES AND THE NATIONAL CONSCIENCE" (cont'd)

"We are Biblically authorized to do this. The prophets of the Old Testament made mighty pronouncements on the affairs of state, and were constantly consulted by governors and kings. Jesus, likewise, never hesitated to meet personal and public questions head on. We make a serious blunder if we think that our Lord confined himself to so-called 'spiritual' matters of comfort, peace of mind, and family conduct. The big public questions of his day were those pertaining to the Samaritan segregation issue, the sabbath laws, the relations of Jews and Gentiles, the payment of the temple tax, tribute to Caesar, and the distance civilians were compelled to carry the baggage of the Roman military. It was the vigorous pronouncements Jesus made on these controversial matters that sent him to the cross. If he had confined himself to little Mickey Mouse morals, he would never have been heard of.

"The New Testament church also ventured into the realm of social action. The most notable example of this was the Jerusalem Study Conference described in the 15th Chapter of Acts, chaired by James, the brother of Jesus. As a result of the discussion and the findings of this conference, there was transmitted to the Gentile churches a carefully worded pronouncement that clarified a number of burning issues. This statement asserted the freedom of the Gentile Christians from circumcision and the requirements of the Mosaic law. It defined the sex standards of the Gospel. It cleared up also various questions as to dietary regulations and meat offered to idols. As we look back on these debates from the vantage point of the 20th Century, we jump to the mistaken conclusion that these were exclusively religious and church matters. In those days, however, they were red hot social and political questions, the answers to which left people open to the charge of being pro-Samaritan, pro-Jewish, pro-Gentile, pro-Roman or pro-something else, as the case might be.

"The Church today, therefore, has a clear Biblical mandate to teach and enlighten the conscience of our own generation on the life and death issues of our time, which are those pertaining to economics, race relations, bomb tests, disarmament, peace and war, and the separation of church and state. If we are silent in these areas, we are not keeping faith with the Scriptures, whether with the prophets and the law givers, or Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament. We are commissioned by the authority of the Holy Scripture to speak with conviction and power in all the areas of freedom, justice and truth, providing always that we ourselves shall be humble and teachable, never pretending to an infallibility God has never given to any church.

"It is particularly important that we speak clearly to the agencies of government that literally hold the life or death of nations in their hands.

"The churches which do not speak to the conscience of mankind in this situation are unfaithful to the mind and spirit of our Lord. He came not to destroy the enemy, but to abolish the enmity. We are challenged as never before to shift the emphasis from defense by deterrence to defense by repentance, from a program of massive retaliation to a policy of massive reconciliation.

"The cold war in which we are now engaged is nothing less than a war against God. We are changing our very nature into a thing of evil. The blood of our fellowmen and the guilt of the ages will be upon our hands if we do not warn men to return to the reconciling realities of the cross. What the world needs is not more military hardware, but more food, more love, more hope, more trade, more schools and medical care -- more of all that Christ came to bring us in the good news of the Gospel.

"The power of God that raised Christ from the dead can also lift the nations out of their present grave of destruction and despair, if with the help of God we boldly repeat the life and message of the Man of Galilee again."

REPORT OF THE FIFTH WORLD ORDER STUDY CONFERENCE NOW OFF THE PRESS

In an attractive cover embodying symbols of the cross and the world, the published Report of the Fifth World Order Study Conference sums up the findings on the theme, "Christian Responsibility on a Changing Planet." It has been compiled by the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches for the Conference, indicating, however, that views in the Report are not to be regarded as necessarily reflecting the views of the Department or of the National Council.

The Report sets forth the story of the Conference with an account of its methods of operation, and of the background work in preparation for the Conference. The recognition given to this Study Conference is symbolized by the inclusion of the greetings of President Eisenhower, UN Secretary-General Hammarskjold, and UN General Assembly President Malik. The Conference Message to the Churches is given in full. Accompanying it is a statement on Sino-American Relations, made by the Chairman and included in the Report by action of the Conference. The reports of the four working sections are given in the full text. Resolutions which they recommended and the Conference adopted are also included under the headings of the working sections: "The Power Struggle and Security in a Nuclear-Space Age," "Overseas Areas of Rapid Social Change," "Changing Dimensions of Human Rights," "International Institutions and Peaceful Change." Two appendices show relationships between some positions of the Fifth World Order Study Conference and actions of the National Council of Churches in the field of international affairs.

The Report cost is 35¢ per single copy, on prepaid orders; plus 8¢ postage per copy if not prepaid. Quantity prices on request. Order from: Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10.

CHURCHES JOIN IN NATIONWIDE PROGRAM FOR PEACE

The churches working together through the National Council are concerting their efforts through the Department of International Affairs for a year of coordinated emphasis from June 1959 to June 1960, in an intensive program for peace. It includes the cooperation of denominations, state and local councils of churches, constituent units of the National Council of Churches, and other church related organizations. The schedule:

SUMMER: Leadership Training in Conferences -- denominational and ecumenical

SEPT.-OCT: Leadership Training Seminars in every possible state council of churches

NOV.-DEC: Leadership Training Seminars in every possible local council of churches

JAN.-JUNE, 1960: Education and Action Programs in every possible local church.

Individuals are urged to contact their denominational leaders and state and local council of churches for help in this Nationwide Program. Materials, suggestions and details are available from the Department of International Affairs.

This Newsletter is published approximately 10 times per year, September-June, by the Department of International Affairs of the National Council of Churches; the Honorable Ernest A. Gross, Chairman; Dr. Kenneth L. Maxwell, Executive Director; Dr. Darrell Randall, Associate Executive Director. Prepared by the staff to provide specialized information for education and action on international issues. Viewpoints expressed should be regarded as not necessarily the policy of the Department or of the National Council. It is designed for denominational and council secretaries; national, state, and local committees; ministers, laymen, women, and youth who wish to keep up with the work of the churches in this field. Subscription: \$1.00 per year.